

Mortality Among Littoral Fauna at Rottneſt Island.—In January 1959 Dr. E. P. Hodgkin reported the catastrophic deſtruction of littoral fauna and flora on the ſhore platforms near Fremantle (W.A. Nat., 7: 6-11). The catastrophe was due to a combination of ſeveral factors, very low tides, heat and ſtill water. Theſe effects were alſo noted at Rottneſt.

When I was working on the reef at Cape Vlaming, Rottneſt Island, on January 2, 1962, evidence of a ſimilar catastrophe was noted. The following animals were dead or dying on the reef platform:—

Coelenterata

The Beadlet Anemone (*Actinia tenebroſa*). Theſe animals were found floating in pools; many were in a ſtate of decomposition.

Molluſca

Chitons (*Clavarizona*), which uſually ſtand extremes of deſiccation and heat, were found lying at the bottom of pools near their homes.

The limpet colonies appeared to have ſuffered greatly. Dead ſpecimens of *Siphonaria luzonica* and *Patelloida alticoſtata* were found and their empty home ſites were very evident.

Many ſpecimens of ſmall Sea Hares (*Aplyſia*) were found lying at the bottom of pools.

Crustacea

Small crabs were ſeen, many in a ſtate of decomposition. They appeared to be thoſe uſually aſſociated with ſponges.

Echinodermata

Large numbers of dead *Echinometra mathaei* were found; all were in a ſtate of decomposition. A few dead *Tripneustes gratilla* were alſo ſeen.

Vertebrata

Blennies were noted in an exhausted condition, ſwimming near the ſurface. They reacted very ſluggiſhly when handled.

The weather at the time was very hot and the water on the reef particularly ſtill and warm. Dr. Hodgkin informs me that on January 1 and 2 tide levels on the Fremantle gauge were normal for ſummer conditions, never falling below 1.9 ft. with a mean of 2.3 ft. on 1ſt. However, on December 28, 29 and 30, although not excecptionally low, they ranged between 1.0 and 2.1 ft. with a mean of 1.6 ft. The Cape Vlaming platforms lie between 1.7 and 2.5 ft. above datum and, if the ſea was calm, there would be little renewal of water on them during theſe three days.

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